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Editorial Office 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904
Come visit us at our Web site: <http://www.absg.adventist.org>

Principal Contributor
The General Conference
Health and Temperance
Ministries Department

Editor
Clifford R. Goldstein

Associate Editor
Soraya Homayouni

Publication Manager
Lea Alexander Greve

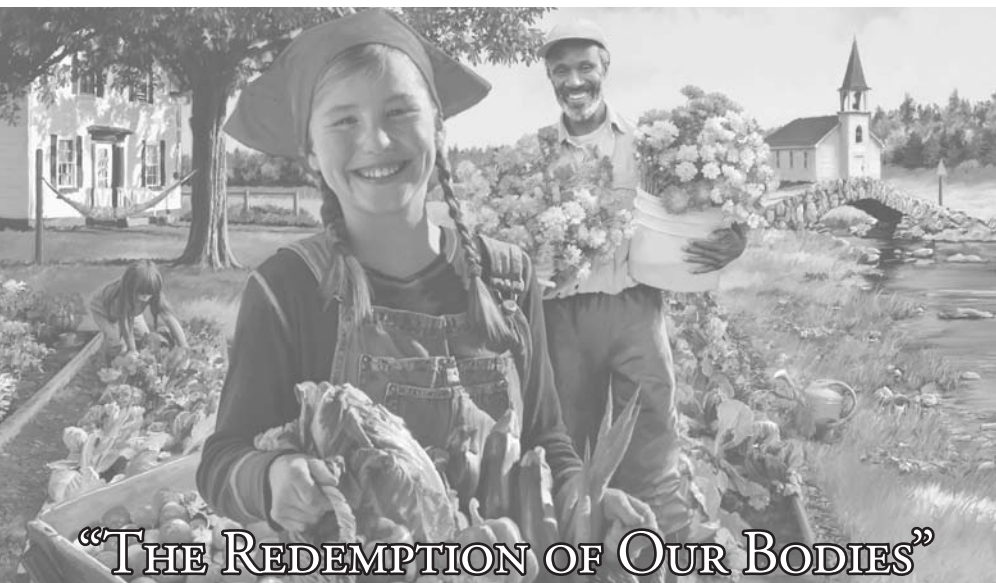
Editorial Assistant
Sharon Thomas-Crews

Pacific Press® Coordinator
Paul A. Hey

Art Director and Illustrator
Lars Justinen

Concept Design
Dever Designs

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“THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODIES”

If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee” (*Exod. 15:26*).

The promise of immunity from Egypt’s diseases was given to the children of Israel soon after they left their captivity. Yet, this promise wasn’t based simply on supernatural intervention; it was based also, maybe even especially, on the natural laws of health. If they followed what the Lord commanded them to do in the area of health and sanitation, as opposed to what their captors did (for instance, while the Egyptians used human excrement for medicinal purposes, the Hebrews were to bury theirs outside the camp), they would be spared the ailments that afflicted the Egyptians.

Even here, then, we can see God’s concern for not just the spiritual well-being of His people but for their physical well-being, their health, as well. This idea also is found in the Hebrew word *shalom*, commonly translated as “peace.” Yet, the word conveys a deeper sense, that of a completeness, of a wholeness and a fullness that involves the total person, physical health included. The first use of the word *shalom* in the Old Testament appears when Jacob, inquiring about Laban, the grandson of Abraham’s brother, asks, “And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well” (*Gen. 29:6*). In both instances, the word translated “well” comes from *shalom*.

Of course, it makes perfect sense that God would care about our physical health. After all, He created us as physical beings. Before sin, before the Fall, we were already in the flesh. We were made as fleshly beings. Our fall wasn't to the flesh; it was a fall in the flesh. Our bodies aren't evil, or bad, the prison houses for the soul or the like (as some religions have taught). Our bodies are wonderful gifts from a loving God who created us in His image and who wants us to enjoy our physical existence, at least as much as possible in this fallen world.

Thus, this quarter we are going to look at what's often been a neglected aspect of the wonderful truths God has given us as a movement, and that is the health message. The Lord revealed these principles to us for the same reason He died for us, because He loves us and wants what's in our best interest.

Of course, we all are mortal, we all face sickness, and, unless Christ comes in our lifetime, we all die. Nothing is going to change that now, and certainly not healthful living. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't do our best to take care of ourselves; that doesn't mean we aren't under a divine obligation to take care of our body

temples. As Paul expressed it, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20, NKJV).

This quarter's lesson on healthful living, written by the General Conference Health Department in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A., was produced with the desire to help us enjoy all the shalom we possibly can now, until that final day in which we receive, once and forever, "the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:23, NIV).

Our bodies are wonderful gifts from a loving God who created us in His image and who wants us to enjoy our physical existence, at least as much as possible in this fallen world.

Contributors from the Health and Temperance Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists were Allan Handysides, Kathleen Kuntaraf, Peter Landless, Stoy Proctor, and Thomas Zirkle.



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The Roma, or Gypsy people, are a tight-knit ethnic group living in communities throughout Europe and elsewhere. And they are opening up to the gospel. Fifteen years ago only a handful of Roma Adventists lived in one city in Bulgaria. Following evangelistic meetings, the church grew rapidly. Word spread through family groups, and today 1,000 Roma in this city are Seventh-day Adventists. So many visitors attend some Sabbath services that the members are asked to stay away to make room for guests.

In the town of Montana in northwestern Bulgaria, another Roma congregation has organized following evangelistic meetings. The 30 members and at least that many visitors meet in a rundown café. The lay pastor visits the people in their homes to build trust. He leads a study group for youth, none of whom are yet members.

This congregation needs a decent place to worship, a place to bring their friends to Jesus. I want to help them learn that Jesus died for them. I'm glad that part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will provide a church for this growing Roma congregation. For me it's personal.

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